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12 February 1953

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INTELLIGENCE ASSUMPTIONS FOR
FEDERAL CIVIL DEFENSE ADMINISTRATION

1. Danger of war between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics exists now and will continue to exist in the foreseeable future. Such a war, if it occurs, might be initiated by a surprise attack upon the continental United States.

2. Soviet military, economic, security and propaganda measures taken in response to a developing situation might provide some degree of strategic warning. Although the approach of hostile aircraft to continental United States targets might not be detected at present, it is assumed that a warning system capable of providing three to six hours of warning will be completely operational by the end of 1955. Until the end of 1954, however, it is improbable that more than one hour's warning would be received.

3. Such an attack could strike any point in the United States, and major concentrations of population and industry would receive a high priority.

4. This attack would consist principally of atomic weapons delivered by air, introduced clandestinely, or delivered as

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warheads in guided missiles launched from submarine or surface ships. (In the latter case, no warning would be received.)

5. Chemical and biological agents might be employed in clandestine attacks against persons, livestock, and crops. Either as a part of the air attack or by clandestine means, nerve gas might be used against key personnel targets. Attempts at sabotage of industry and communications would occur either concurrently with or after the air attack. All of these means might be used at the outbreak of war even if the continental United States were not subjected to air attack. Biological agents whose origin could not be identified might be used at any time.

6. It is assumed that the Soviet stockpile in mid-1953 consists of about 100 weapons, having a yield of 30-100 kilotons, that this will arise to about 200 by mid-1954 and to 300 by mid-1955. (The actual figure may be from two-thirds to twice as many as this estimate. Changes in weapon design may substantially increase or decrease the number of weapons, and likewise alter the kilotonnage yield of the individual weapons.)

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